

1. (Amended) A method of creating an image, said image to be formed by rendering and compositing at least a plurality of graphical objects, each said object having a predetermined outline, said method comprising:

a dividing step, of dividing a space in which said outlines are defined into a plurality regions, each said region being defined by at least one region outline substantially following at least one of said predetermined outlines or parts thereof and being substantially formed by segments of a virtual grid encompassing said space;

A1 a manipulation step, of manipulating said regions to determine a plurality of further regions, wherein each said further region has a corresponding compositing expression;

a classification step, of classifying said further regions according to at least one attribute of said graphical objects within said further regions;

a modification step, of modifying each said corresponding compositing expression according to a classification of each said further region to form an optimized compositing expression for each said further region compared to said corresponding compositing expression; and

a composite step, of compositing said image using each of said optimized compositing expressions.

14. (Amended) A method of creating an image, said image to be formed by rendering and compositing at least a plurality of graphical objects, each said object having a predetermined outline, said method comprising:

A2 a dividing step, of dividing a space in which said outlines are defined into a plurality regions, each said region being defined by at least one region outline substantially following at least one of said predetermined outlines or parts thereof and being substantially formed by, segments of a virtual grid encompassing said space, wherein each object has two

region outlines arranged either side of said predetermined outline to thus define three regions for each said object, and wherein each said region has a corresponding compositing expression;

 a classification step, of classifying said regions according to at least one attribute of said graphical objects within said regions;

 a modification step, of modifying each said corresponding compositing expression according to a classification of each said region to form an optimized compositing expression for each said region compared to said corresponding compositing expression; and

 a composite step, of compositing said image using each of said optimized compositing expressions.

25. (Amended) An apparatus for creating an image, said image to be formed by rendering and compositing at least a plurality of graphical objects, each said object having a predetermined outline, said apparatus comprising:

 dividing means for dividing a space in which said outlines are defined into a plurality regions, each said region being defined by at least one region outline substantially following at least one of said predetermined outlines or parts thereof and being substantially formed by segments of a virtual grid encompassing said space;

 manipulating means for manipulating said regions to determine a plurality of further regions, wherein each said further region has a corresponding compositing expression;

 classifying means for classifying said further regions according to at least one attribute of said graphical objects within said further regions;

 modifying means for modifying each said corresponding compositing expression according to a classification of each said further region to form an optimized compositing expression for each said further region compared to said corresponding compositing expression; and

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compositing means for compositing said image using each of said optimized compositing expressions.

38. (Amended) An apparatus for creating an image, said image to be formed by rendering and compositing at least a plurality of graphical objects, each said object having a predetermined outline, said apparatus comprising:

dividing means for dividing a space in which said outlines are defined into a plurality regions, each said region being defined by at least one region outline substantially following at least one of said predetermined outlines or parts thereof and being substantially formed by segments of a virtual grid encompassing said space, wherein each object has two region outlines arranged either side of said predetermined outline to thus define three regions for each said object, and wherein each said region has a corresponding compositing expression;

classifying means for classifying said regions according to at least one attribute of said graphical objects within said regions;

modifying means for modifying each said corresponding compositing expression according to a classification of each said region to form an optimized compositing expression for each said region compared to said corresponding compositing expression; and

compositing means for compositing said image using each of said optimized compositing expressions.

49. (Amended) A computer program product including a computer readable medium having a plurality of software modules for creating an image, said image to be formed by rendering and compositing at least a plurality of graphical objects, each said object having a predetermined outline, said computer program product comprising:

a dividing module for dividing a space in which said outlines are defined into a plurality regions, each said region being defined by at least one region outline

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substantially following at least one of said predetermined outlines or parts thereof and being substantially formed by segments of a virtual grid encompassing said space;

a manipulating module for manipulating said regions to determine a plurality of further regions, wherein each said further region has a corresponding compositing expression;

a classifying module for classifying said further regions according to at least one attribute of said graphical objects within said further regions;

a modifying module for modifying each said corresponding compositing expression according to a classification of each said further region to form an optimized compositing expression for each said further region compared to said corresponding compositing expression; and

a compositing module for compositing said image using each of said optimized compositing expressions.

62. (Amended) A computer program product including a computer readable medium having a plurality of software modules for creating an image, said image to be formed by rendering and compositing at least a plurality of graphical objects, each said object having a predetermined outline, said computer program product comprising:

a dividing module for dividing a space in which said outlines are defined into a plurality regions, each said region being defined by at least one region outline substantially following at least one of said predetermined outlines or parts thereof and being substantially formed by segments of a virtual grid encompassing said space, wherein each object has two region outlines arranged either side of said predetermined outline to thus define three regions for each said object, and wherein each said region has a corresponding compositing expression;

a classifying module for classifying said regions according to at least one attribute of said graphical objects within said regions;

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a modifying module for modifying each said corresponding compositing expression according to a classification of each said region to form an optimized compositing expression for each said region compared to said corresponding compositing expression; and

a compositing module for compositing said image using each of said optimized compositing expressions.

73. (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein one or more objects within said further regions are eliminated from one or more of said corresponding compositing expressions depending on said classifications.

74. (New) An apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said modifying means is configured to eliminate one or more objects within said further regions from one or more of said corresponding compositing expressions depending on said classifications.

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75. (New) A computer program product according to claim 49, wherein said modifying module is configured to eliminate one or more objects within said further regions from one or more of said corresponding compositing expressions depending on said classifications.

76. (New) A method of creating an image, said image to be formed by rendering and compositing at least a plurality of graphical objects, each said object having a predetermined outline, said method comprising:

a dividing step, of dividing a space in which said outlines are defined into a plurality of regions, each said region being defined by at least one region outline substantially following at least one of said predetermined outlines or parts thereof and being substantially formed by segments of a virtual grid encompassing said space;